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ABSTRACT

This presentation, intended to help English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructors, covers the following areas: (1) classifying and selecting students for the program, (2) making a needs assessment of material to be taught, (3) setting up a language support program, (4) developing appropriate materials for a preparation class and a language support class to assure success during occupational training, and (5) teaching these materials effectively and efficiently. A number of sample lesson plans and reproductions of lesson materials, such as reading passages, student exercises, and dialogs are included as well as steps one might follow in developing ESP material. The emphasis here is on health-field related occupations. The suggestions for lesson development are appropriate for both teacher-centered and learner-centered environments. (Author/AMH)

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Language for Specific Purposes Program-Development and Implementation of a Vocation-specific Language Acquisition Course of Study

Sigrid Vivian

ABSTRACT:

This presentation is intended to help Language for Specific Purposes instructors to: classify and select the students for this program, make a needs assessment of what should be taught, set up an occupational language support program in two sections, develop appropriate materials for the preparation class as well as the language support class to assure success during occupational training, and teach these materials efficiently and effectively. While every aspect mentioned will receive coverage, the emphasis will be on appropriate material and lesson development.

Levels: Secondary, adult, college, new teachers, student teachers, resource teachers, and program coordinators.

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Problem

"In the United States the influx of over 480,000 Indochinese refugees, 130,000 Cubans, 50,000 Haitians, and thousands of other refugees and immigrants during the past five years has had a profound effect on the development of adult second language theory and curriculum design." (Crandall 1981) To

this can be added that this new type of adult student has had a pronounced impact on language teaching as well.

Upon arrival in a strange community with a foreign language, these newcomers need to cope with immediate and most likely urgent daily living problems. "What's your address?" "How do you spell that?" "How long have you been living there?" These are examples of the types of questions typically asked of these adults during their first week of stay. This new type of student, in order to survive, must soon learn to get the right buses, order meals, seek jobs, spell names, and pronounce street addresses clearly. It is frequently essential that they understand coloquial phrases--phrases that may be contracted or spoken rapidly by native speakers of the language. Moreover, to survive, they must safely and effectively function in a job very soon. The situations in the daily life of these adult students and the language ability required to meet them differ greatly from those of the traditional language student.

2. Partial Answer

As a response to the language dilemma of these adults as language students, rigorous reexamination of language, language learning, language teaching, as well as curriculum design occurred. This led to various versions of Speech Act Theories and further development and wider acceptance of such concepts as the Notional Functional Approach. It led to language training versus developing a true facility in speaking a second language based on the structure of language and progression from the simple to the complex: It led to a functional approach assisting the student in learning to function as

quickly as possible in limited, pressing situations and concentrating on the most important competencies necessary, coupled with survival curriculum. As a consequence, a number of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs evolved that are functional and competency-based. They stress communicative needs and their linguistic resources and involve both situational and task analysis. These are known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Efforts, until recently, tended to concentrate on developing pre-vocational or general occupational ESL programs, also known as vocational ESL (VESL) courses. They reflect the students' urgent needs to master the functional linguistic requirements for surviving in a community and successfully seeking a job. These efforts provide a partial response to the needs of this new type of student.

3. Further Answer

The other part is language training for a particular job. This new type of students also needs to know job-specific language as soon as possible to keep a job and safely and successfully function on the job. This is a major part of ESP, immensely important to the student, but the part that still causes notorious difficulty to teachers and students alike. It is one matter to successfully communicate the need for bread, a bus ticket, or even a checkup by a doctor. It is quite another to pass a job safety test, comprehend a machine's operating or maintenance manual, instructions, directions, guidelines, labels, text books, vocational lectures and tests, or communicate with customers, colleagues, and superiors. Even many entry-level jobs require good listening skills, oral competence and some reading and writing skills, plus much cultural awareness of our complex technological society. Little

concensus and few guidelines exist on how to conduct such classes. "What works" depends on many individual factors of given learning, training, and future employment situations. A teacher is expected to be flexible and to cope for the most part based on his own resources, creativity, and careful judgment.

B. PROGRAM DESIGN

The following are one instructor's ideas and approach to developing and implementing such a job-specific language acquisition class. For the past two years I have taught ESL Health Technologies language support classes, in which I have led the students' language development to successful completion of a college level nursing assistant program, with 12 units of college credit and two state certificates, one as a Nursing Assistant and one as a Home Health Worker. This paper is a practitioner's response to numerous visits by colleagues to my classroom, observing and inquiring mostly about my curriculum and methodology.

The language acquisition program for the nursing assistant training is divided into two phases: 1) a nine-week/10 hrs/week preparation class attended by students parallel to attending a general occupational class, and 2) a nine-week/10 hrs/week language job-specific class conducted while students are in actual training.

C. PREPARATION CLASS

Students

The course serves approximately 20 to 25 students with an average attrition rate of 10-15%. They can be broken down into two groups: 1) those

who are competent or have some knowledge in the subject matter, i.e., professionals in their native country at various levels of specialization, and 2) those who have little or no competence in the subject. With the first group we are dealing with basic language training. The subject matter can be used as a vehicle to teach the language. The second group must be taught language, content, and study skills. Graduation from our particular Indochinese Refugee Assistance Project's (IRAP) pre-vocational program or passing of an entrance examination on general language ability are a prerequisite to admission to the course.

Class Design

It is designed to give students general language training in the fields of medical services in the community, health in the home, first aid, human reproduction and development, proper nutrition, and the seven body systems while preparing them for the vocational program entrance examination. Learners are allowed to repeat the class once with instructor's permission.

Specific Objectives

The specific course objectives are to achieve 1) functional communicative competence in the course content with heavy emphasis on technical vocabulary development and job-related dialogue and 2) passive language knowledge to pass entrance requirements for the vocational training course.

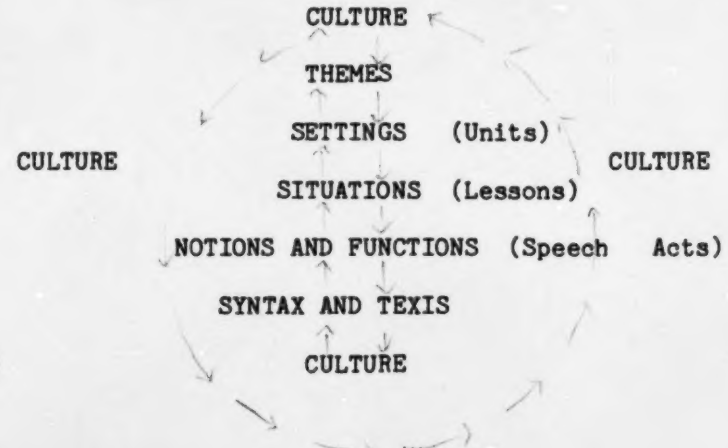
Materials

The teaching material is developed in six units of 4-8 lessons each. It is teacher-made based on the bibliography attached. (Appendix A)

The theme is set by the vocational course. The units (settings) are based on the course content of the vocational class, but significantly rearranged and refocused to appeal based on their general high importance and interest for effective daily living. For example, the aspect of nutrition is made relevant by relating it to personal health and well-being. The concept of "Fluid Intake and Output" is introduced in a lesson "Water," stressing its essentiality to human life. A culturally difficult topic but a major aspect of Nursing Assisting, dealt with in the vocational course as "Special Treatments" and including perineal care, is presented in a unit "Human Reproduction and Development." It consists of lessons (situations) titled "Where Babies Come From," "The Infant," "The Adolescent," "The Future Mother," and "The Future Father." The language covers health-related technical aspects that are treated as general as possible to arouse the learner's interest and appreciation while he is not yet in the vocational training. It contains a considerable amount of technical vocabulary, common language, plus speech acts to make and maintain contact, to give or ask for something, to express intentions, as well as other functions and conventionalities.

The following shows the overall perspective of the path of second language development that is needed before specification of particular speech acts can occur:

Figure 1:



(Ingram, 1981)

An example from my material for the ESL Health Technologies class is: 1) Themes come in clusters, mine is "Health"; 2) Settings come in clusters, and one example from my curriculum is "Nutrition"; 3) Situations represent a further breakdown into various specifics, such as "The Basic Four," "Proteins," "Vitamins," "Minerals," "Carbohydrates," "Water," and "Regular and Special Diets," which are dealt with one at a time; 4) particular linguistic tasks are identified for the situation and appropriate functions are then supplied. Syntax is studied or reviewed as necessary. Heavy emphasis is placed on vocabulary development. It is important to point out that throughout the teaching of language the teaching of culture is an important and integral part of the curriculum. I do, however, teach some cultural aspects particularly pertaining to the work situation in a rather formalized and separate way, and the material is available upon request.

My situations are reading passages, partly originals and partly syntactically and semantically simplified adaptations of vocational texts. They consist of language containing structures a bit beyond the students' current level of reproductive competence. This approach is supported by a number of insights on second language acquisition versus language learning processes, from the work of a number of researchers, which has been synthesized by Krashen (1980) in the "Input Hypothesis." Students acquire understanding through content and extra-linguistic information. The focus is on communication, not form.

A sample lesson, "Water," reads as follows:

Class: _____ Name: _____

WATER

Have you ever been without water for a long time? How did you feel? You are probably aware of the importance of water to life. A loss of ten percent of the body's water results in serious illness. A loss of 20 percent usually results in death.

Water (H_2O) contains two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen in each molecule. About 60 to 70 percent of your body is water. Water is one of the main substances in cytoplasm. About 90 percent of blood plasma is water.

Water is vital in many ways. It is used in digestion to break down food. Also, food must be dissolved in water to be absorbed by the blood. In sweat glands and kidneys, waste products dissolved in water are removed from the blood. Both sweat and urine consist mostly of water. Some water is evaporated from the lungs in breathing. The rest is absorbed and discharged through the intestinal system.

1. Water in the Human Body

Body part	% H_2O
Whole body	60-70
(Bone marrow free)	25
Soft tissues	70-80
Liver	40
Muscles	75
Blood (plasma)	90
Kidney	80
Brain (gray matter)	85

2. Fluid Balance
Intake and Output

Intake Output

To Student:
Draw a picture of a balanced scale.

3. Break down of food into H_2O

$C_6H_{12}O_6 6O_2 \quad 6CO_2+6H_2O$

The average healthy adult will take in about 3½ quarts of fluid every day. The same person will also eliminate about the same amount daily. Intake and output balance in the normally functioning body.

An imbalance of fluids in the body occurs when too much fluid is kept in the body or when too much fluid is lost. In some medical conditions, fluid may be held in the body tissues and make them swell. This is called edema. In other conditions, much fluid may be lost by vomiting, bleeding, severe diarrhea, or too much sweating.

All of the food you eat contains water. Vegetables and fruits have a high water content. You also obtain water by drinking it and by drinking milk and juices. Some water is produced when food is broken down within cells.

Water is essential to human life. Next to oxygen, water is the most important thing the body takes in. Intake occurs through all types of food, and output happens in various ways. Normal intake and normal output means that there is fluid balance, which is essential to good health. Losing one-fifth of the body's fluid will result in death.

Unit: Nutrition, L. II, 1

Here are some very basic steps toward developing ESP material:

1. Obtain a course outline from the vocational instructor.
2. Find out how much of what topic will be covered in what time span.
3. Get a copy of the textbook, the instructor's research books, course objectives, lesson objectives, lecture notes, audio-visual material list, etc., as possible.
4. Familiarize yourself with content and special language and vocabulary.
5. Establish what, for your purposes, is ESP vocabulary.
6. Establish which technical terms and concepts you will want to cover in your preparation class and which ones you will want to let go for later instruction.
7. Decide how much emphasis you want to place on what topics and what concepts.
8. Choose health-related topics of general high interest and importance for immediate survival, as possible.
9. Write your reading passages interweaving the technical vocabulary.
10. Let the amount of coverage you give depend on the importance and difficulty level of the concepts. For example:
    a. The topic "Nutrition" is of high importance in Nursing Assistant training. The pertaining chapter in the class textbook is long and packed with difficult concepts and terminology. The study schedule allots only 2 class sessions to this topic. The vocational instructor tests heavily in this area. Therefore, I have developed a whole unit of eight lessons on this topic for my preparation class.
    b. The topic "Fluid Intake and Output" is treated extensively. It too holds top priority. The textbook chapter is lengthy, but

the concepts and terminology are relatively easy. The students have several practical experiences during training which facilitate learning. The instructor tests heavily in this area. I cover the topic with one lesson in my preparation class under the title "Water."

c. Topics such as "Observing and Recording Vital Signs" or "Admission, Transfer, and Discharge of Patients in the Hospital" are also covered by whole chapters in the text. They are of equal importance to the two topics above. Yet I may only create an awareness by interweaving the terms into content under different topics for the preparation class if I have reason to believe that the trainee will have a good chance of learning them later for one reason or another.

Other language skills practiced are neutrally valuable routines and patterns such as asking for something, thanking someone, telling someone, making contact of any kind, and many others. These are built into short dialogues, including job related speech acts and technical vocabulary at the same time. An example here is the notion of "expressing pleasure" coupled with the technical term "thermometer." Various functions can be taught: 1) nonverbal: smile, look directly at the person and smile, give the person a hug, display a gift (if appropriate) 2) coloquial: Ooooh! Wow! Super! Great! 3) standard verbal: Thank you very much. I really appreciate this! How nice of you! I never expected this!

Application: A.: I went shoppin' today. I got somethin' for you.
B.: Oh, how nice of you. You really shouldn't have. (Implying but I'm glad you did.) What is it?
A.: It's in that box over there. Open it.

B.: Well. I really wonder. (Unpacking)
A.: Well?
B.: Hey, a new thermometer! (chuckle)
A.: Chuckle, chuckle.
B.: It's great. You know, I need a new one.

Or, back to the lesson "Water";

Application: A.: I've brought you a pitcher of fresh water.
B.: Gee, thanks.

Usually shorter speech acts than the above one take place on any given topic, and this concept is practiced in class. An example is the following dialogue using the notion "physical description" coupled with the technical term "stretcher." One function taught could be: can you tell me what a . . .

Application: A.: Can you tell me what a stretcher looks like?

If negative: B.: Sorry. I don't know. Ask Alice.

or if positive: A.: Sure. It's ----------.

B.: Are you sure it's ----------?

A.: Of course. I ----------(Scholz, 1981)

(Alternative functions could be: I'd like to know _____, or What's a _____ like?)

Lessons as much as possible consist of a uniform format: a one-page reading passage supported by an abundance of illustrations and demonstration material; comprehension questions; at least three different vocabulary exercises, usually partly in the form of games as is further mentioned in the lesson development plan; several short dialogues using the same vocabulary and the same content; several short dialogues using the same vocabulary but different content for transfer.

Instruction

Instruction is eclectic and teacher-centered. It follows a rather conventional and structured pattern to minimize variables in the classroom

management and instead to allow the learner to focus on language acquisition. It covers study skill exercises, listening skill exercises, content familiarization exercises, dialogue exercises, and composition skill exercises. My specific approach is detailed in the comprehensive "Lesson Development Plan for Language Preparation Class for Health Technologies." It is designed for any course for which the text and material is available. It is meant as a general guideline for the inexperienced instructor. The more creative and experienced instructor should conduct his lesson development in a more learner-centered way.

Lesson Development Plan for Vocation-specific Language Skills Preparation Class in Health Technologies

A. Motivation Phase

1. The day before study of the text
   a. Instructor awakens interest in topic by impressing relevancy to effective daily living and by relating it to learner's everyday life situations;
   b. Instructor stimulates learner's comments on new topic;
   c. Instructor sends home new text;
2. The day of study of text
   a. Instructor attempts free-flow dialogue with class about text;
   b. Learner volunteers write on blackboard pertinent vocabulary they recognize in text from memory without using text;

B. Skill Development Phase

1. Study Skill Exercises

   The formal teaching of the following study skills is suggested at the beginning of each new semester, at the beginning of each class session, for 5-10 minutes, until competency is established.
   a. Reading skills - (feature identification)
   b. Listening skills - (key word identification for overall comprehension)
   c. Dictionary skills - (alphabetizing, symbol identification)
   d. Vocabulary familiarization skills - (association techniques, understanding from content and extra-linguistic features)
   e. Functional language skills (communication versus grammatically correct reproductions of abstract language routines and patterns)
   f. Test-taking skills - (fill-in, match, true-false) (Material and carry-through for native junior high school learners is applicable.)

2. Listening Skill Exercises
   a. Instructor reads text to class at least two times;
   b. Instructor reads text to class sentence by sentence and explains new vocabulary with the help of realia, visual aids, gesturing, mimicking, acting out, etc.;

3. Listening and Recognition Skill Exercises
   a. Instructor reads lesson text out loud while learner follows written material reading silently;
   b. Instructor reads text out loud sentence by sentence at slow speed. After reading each sentence, instructor asks learner to circle new vocabulary in the sentence with a certain color pencil--vocabulary is predetermined by instructor and listed on separate vocabulary list to be handed to students later;
   c. Learners explore same text silently, circling additional unknown vocabulary with pencil of different color;

4. Vocabulary Familiarization Exercises
   a. Instructor guides learner's speculation of vocabulary definitions from context--oral work without dictionaries;
   b. Learner volunteers write new words, predetermined by instructor on blackboard or construction paper (class word chart for later use) one by one with correct definitions or synonyms--dictionaries are needed now. Under "other new words" also write learner-identified new vocabulary;
   c. Instructor guides pronunciation exercises of new vocabulary - large group and individual;
   d. Instructor provides spelling exercises of new vocabulary - large group and individual:
      1) Scramble-up letter exercise
      2) Letter fill-in exercise
      3) Word replacement exercise
         a) Have on class word chart new word list plus definitions
         b) Erase one word at a time at random;
         c) Elicit word from class;
         d) Ask class to spell it;
         e) Ask learners to write it down on scratch paper;
      4) Provide vocabulary memorization exercises through association;
      5) Provide vocabulary use exercises through situational speech acts;
      6) Learner fills in definitions on individual vocabulary list;
         a) From memory (Evaluation)
         b) From class chart as necessary;
      7) Learners group into pairs and quiz each other on all aspects of vocabulary acquisition mentioned (change partners and practice again, etc.)
      8) Instructor guides vocabulary acquisition through games:
         a) Password
         b) Bingo
         c) Scrabble

9) Learner takes cloze test (Evaluation)
10) Learner completes mix and match vocabulary exercise (Evaluation)

5. Discussion Exercises
   a. Instructor guides discussion of content of text by asking questions and providing practice of learner responses. - open book work;
   b. Instructor guides brainstorming on text by eliciting general responses, stressing functional language only - closed book work;
   c. Instructor guides sequenced discussion of text by asking appropriate questions, stressing communicative language only;

6. Content Familiarization Exercises
   a. Instructor guides content familiarization through questions and answers;
   b. Instructor guides retell of content of text with focus on completeness and accuracy of facts, not grammar;
   c. Instructor guides retell of content of text by substituting new vocabulary with synonyms or definitions;
   d. Learners practice in pairs;
   e. Learners demonstrate mastery in front of class (Evaluation) possibly 1-2 weeks later;

7. Dialogue Exercises
   a. Instructor guides brief dialogues, 3-4 speech acts, revolving around content of text using new vocabulary;
   b. Learners practice expressing different intentions, needs, and wishes;

8. Transfer Exercise
   a. Instructor provides longer fill-in dialogue with blank spaces and key words using new vocabulary in different context (Evaluation)
   b. Learners practice using new vocabulary in brief dialogues in different context.

9. Writing Skill Exercises
   a. Instructor guides review of core material and records learner responses on blackboard at random;
   b. Instructor guides outlining of material;
   c. Instructor guides development of
      1) Topic sentence;
      2) Sequencing, enumerating, etc.;
      3) Concluding;

C. Evaluation

1. Ongoing evaluation:
   a. Oral demonstration of communicative competency;
   b. Written tests;

2. Final evaluation:
   a. Oral demonstration of communicative competency;
   b. Written tests--fill in, mix and match vocabulary tests, and illustrations with blanks for naming, as appropriate.

Objective: Functional linguistic proficiency of learner

D. LANGUAGE SUPPORT CLASS--DURING TRAINING

Students

The course serves between 10 to 15 students. Selection is based on passing the entrance examination for the vocational program as well as on student's ability to learn, speed of learning, suitability of the person for the vocation, interest of the person in the vocation, and overall readiness level of the person.

Class Design

It is designed foremost to reinforce the language and material studied in the vocational training program while preparing students for successful passing of the final course examination.

Specific Objectives

The specific course objectives are to achieve 1) communicative competence in the course content with heavy emphasis on job-related dialogue, 2) listening skills proficiency to comprehend directions, and 3) passive language skills to pass the written final examination.

Materials

The teaching material is determined by the vocational skills instructor. It is supplied in the form of lectures, hand-outs of text summaries as well as additional material, textbooks, audio-visual materials, and demonstrations. The language is converted into ESP material based on the language needs of the learners and future employers. This is achieved by changing the didactic

approach from direct transmission of "learnable" items to a tailor-made course designed to engage the learner in action with only those words he needs at the time. The learners as a unit generate the material for the class. It at times consists of a learner-made, instructor-guided linguistically functional composit of the vocational instructor's presented materials. It foremost consists of a compilation of answers to behavioral lesson objectives.

Lessons vary greatly in format depending on need. They systematically include exercises and games, however, for content, vocabulary and dialogue practice. This aspect is stressed, since due to the great amount of material that has to be covered, an instructor may easily slip into "telling" his students about the language and content. Instead it is essential to continue "teaching." Games are used since they are considered a valuable means of language acquisition, if chosen wisely and used meaningfully. They enhance the classroom setting by providing variety and by allowing the learner exciting participation and involvement instead of focusing on the task of learning. They serve as energizers (Markowski 1981) and lead naturally to communicative competence.

Instruction

Instruction is flexible while following the principles of the "Interactive Learning Program" (ILP). It is an "antitheses to the traditional classroom and follows four components: stimulus, involvement, feedback, and closure. It was developed "to humanize the classroom," by Dr. E. M. Ruiz, Staff of Pupil Personnel Services Dept., Office of the Santa Barbara County Schools, California. It is learner-centered (Edwards and Schlemper 1981). My specific approach is detailed in the comprehensive "Lesson Development Plan for The Language Support Class for Health Technologies." It is especially recommended

when the language instructor does not know what specific language and material the vocational instructor will cover on a given day. Experience has born out that it works best when supported by a resource center stocked with material previously covered, where students that need additional time and help can study outside of class sessions.

Lesson Development Plan for Language Support Class
in Health Technologies

1. Stimulus

Lecture, instruction, assignments, and lesson material of any kind supplied by the vocational instructor;
Note: Two students are instructed to supply language instructor with a copy of notes taken in vocational class. Notes are to be divided into two types: 1) blackboard notes, 2) other notes. Language instructor has generally familiarized himself with material previously.

2. Involvement

a. Discussion of the day's vocational instruction and related happenings in own language;
b. Detailed report in English as large group effort—oral work;
c. Questions and answers session among learners in English with some instructor assistance - oral work;
d. Discussion of lesson objectives in learner's native language;
e. Questions and answers session in English and instructor assistance - oral work;
f. Division of class into small study groups: either native language groups or, if possible, into small groups each containing a professional in the field and a learner whose English language ability is advanced compared to the other learners; (approx. 3 groups)
g. Determining of the day's group reporter and team leader;
h. Working out answers to objectives; If necessary, work load is divided. English is spoken only now - written work;
i. Report of findings by team leader with help of group members; Here groups take turns to be first, last, etc. (used for evaluation)
j. Correction and completion of team leader's report by other groups as needed (used for evaluation)
k. Writing of answers to objectives on construction paper by team leader; (saved for review at a later date)
l. Writing of vocabulary that causes difficulty on blackboard;
m. Supply of definitions and synonyms by learners as much as possible;

3. Feedback
   a. Instructor verification or correction of answers to objectives;
   b. Instructor verification or correction of new vocabulary as to pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and use;
   c. Questions answered by instructor;
   d. Instructor evaluation of completion and correction efforts of group members;
   e. Instructor correction and completion of efforts of group members;
   f. Instructor evaluation of reporter effort;
   g. Demonstration of comprehension of lesson content through language performance plus gesturing, mimicking, role playing, etc., with instructor guidance;

4. Closure
   a. Practicing language proficiency of answers;
   b. Dialoguing in minimal situations (3-4 speech acts per dialogue)
   c. Assignment of students to independent study center for additional work and practice as necessary;

Objective: Functional linguistic proficiency of learner

To make this learner-centered classroom setting possible, the learner has to accept this pragmatic-functional approach. The instructor has to organize, facilitate, and evaluate student effort to lead the learner toward proficiency in finding needed information. He has to turn over to the learner the responsibility in the process of his own learning step-by-step. He need not be a specialist in the vocational field. But he needs to be proficient in the technical vocabulary and language to remain the language authority in the language classroom.

In addition, the formal teaching of study skills as outlined in the Lesson Development Plan for the Preparation Class continues as needed. The following skill exercises are added: 1) Surveying a textbook, 2) Taking notes, 3) Giving a report, 4) Following objectives, 5) Taking tests-(multiple choice and true and false).

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VOCATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE SKILLS CLASS--GENERAL PREPARATION CLASS ..... ( )

Students ..... ( )

Class Design ..... ( )

Materials ..... ( )

Instruction ..... ( )

VOCATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE SKILLS CLASS--SUPPORT DURING TRAINING ..... ( )

Students ..... ( )

Class Design ..... ( )

Materials ..... ( )

Instruction ..... ( )

REFERENCES CITED ..... ( )

Appendixes ..... ( )

A. References for Preparation Class Materials ..... ( )